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FROM: [ ]

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Chief, Arms Control Intelligence Staff

SUBJECT: Confidence Building Measures

DD/A REGISTRY  
FILE: 90-1

1. This is a follow-up to my conversation with John McMahon this morning on confidence building measures. The President is expected to announce, early next week, several new initiatives to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war. The Secretary of Defense plans a public release of these initiatives and will send a report to Congress on 11 April. The Allies and the Soviets are being informed also.

2. The following are the new initiatives, accompanied by ACIS comments:

- The addition of a high-speed facsimile transmission link to the Hotline. This would, in effect, give the Hotline the same capability we now enjoy with the WASHFSX (LDX) system.
- The creation of a Joint Military Communications Link between the U.S. and USSR. This would link, via facsimile only, the NMCC and its Soviet counterpart, the General Staff Operation Center. It would concern only certain carefully prescribed emergency situations of less than Hotline importance and it would be controlled for the U.S. by the National Security Council. FYI: State has been opposing this measure and it could come up at cabinet level.
- The establishment by the U.S. and USSR of high data rate links with their embassies in each other's capital. Current U.S. communications are via commercial satellite links and are rented from the Soviets who control the satellite connection into Moscow and the ground link to the embassy. The new link would go via U.S.-owned satellite (Skylink) [ ]
- Agreement among the world's nations to consult in the event of a nuclear incident involving a terrorist group. This measure may end up in the Committee on Disarmament or the International Atomic Energy Agency. A proposal was considered for a multi-lateral crisis control center, but all agencies judged this too complex an environment to have an effective role.

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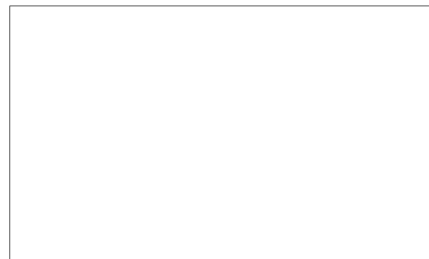
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3. In the public announcement by the Secretary of Defense, he also will propose "for further study several possible new technical and procedural measures which might enhance our ability to verify treaty compliance..." While not specifically identified, these involve on-site inspection and sensing devices, as well as data exchanges. These, however, will require further study before anything is actually proposed to the Soviets.

4. Attached is the pertinent sections of the unclassified report to Congress. (There is also a TOP SECRET version.) If you have any questions on the above, or need any further information, please let me know.

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Attachment:  
As stated



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### III. POSSIBLE NEW MEASURES TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

One of the most effective ways to further the effort already begun by President Reagan to ensure against unintended nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union would be to improve the ability of the two to communicate about crises and military incidents. In examining possible new initiatives for reducing the threat of nuclear weapons use, the Department of Defense has therefore focused on ways of increasing the speed, reliability, accuracy, and completeness of direct communication between the United States and the Soviet Union. In addition, we have studied whether improved communications with other countries could lower the risk of war.

#### A. Hotline Improvements

A priority measure to enhance communications is to improve the Direct Communications Link (DCL, or "Hotline") between the U.S. and Soviet heads of government. The Hotline is, and should remain, for use only in severe emergencies. It would degrade the system, and reduce its impact in major crises, if it were used in cases that could be handled effectively through routine or lower-level bilateral channels.

In keeping with the Hotline mission, the precise number of times that the two heads of state have used it has not been disclosed. It is known that it has been used sparingly during its twenty-year existence, but it has proved invaluable in major crises. U.S. Presidents have cited its use during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War to prevent possible Soviet misunderstanding of U.S. fleet movements in the Mediterranean and during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

The United States and the Soviet Union have significantly upgraded the DCL once since its creation. The system originally consisted of two terminal points with teletype equipment, one full-time duplex wire telegraph circuit (routed Washington-London-Copenhagen-Stockholm-Helsinki-Moscow), and for back-up, one full-time duplex radio-telegraph circuit (routed Washington-Tangier-Moscow). In 1971, the two governments agreed to establish two satellite communication circuits for the DCL, with a system of multiple terminals in each country. When those became operational in 1978, the DCL achieved almost 100 percent technical reliability. The original radio circuit was terminated, while the wire telegraph circuit remains as a back-up.

## **1. Facsimile Transmission Capability**

The Department of Defense has now proposed for consideration by the President the addition of a high-speed facsimile capability to the system. This improvement would increase the DCL's ability for conveying information by enabling the two sides to transmit more, and more complex, data more quickly and reliably. The time saved--even though limited by the slowness of the translation process--could be used to send more messages or for increased deliberation and consultation on each side. In addition, a facsimile transmission capability would minimize or entirely eliminate the need for keyboarding, and therefore the possibility of operator error.

Most important, facsimile equipment would endow the Hotline with a capability which it does not now possess: the ability to exchange graphic information. The precise, detailed, and often easily interpreted information offered by maps, charts, and drawings could be essential in resolving an on-going military crisis. Because graphic information requires little or no translation, the total time saved through this improvement could actually be much greater than that implied simply by the increase in the transmission rate. Translation is the slowest step in the direct communication process. A highly proficient Russian language specialist can produce a full translation at the rate of only 1,000 words per hour, and do a cursory review at the rate of 6,000 words per hour.

## **2. Voice and Video Capability**

The Department of Defense has also considered the possibility of adding a secure voice or video capability to the DCL. We have concluded, however, that this step would carry many more disadvantages than advantages. The United States and the Soviet Union explicitly decided not to include voice capability when they negotiated the original Hotline agreement and its subsequent improvement. On both occasions, they concluded that printed communication would be more private, more precise, and more reliable. The studies leading to this report reinforce that conclusion.

Because voice communication is more difficult than written material to translate, it is far more subject to misunderstanding. In addition, a direct conversation could encourage instant response, thereby denying the head of state the necessary opportunity to consult with advisors and prepare a thoughtful and measured response. For both reasons,

emergency voice communications between the two leaders could reduce, rather than heighten, their ability to resolve a crisis. The same considerations apply, in heightened fashion, to the installation of video conferencing capability.

## **B. Possible New Communications Mechanisms**

### **1. Bilateral Joint Military Communications Link**

One measure which we are now considering would create a Joint Military Communications Link (JMCL), paralleling the DCL, between the United States and the Soviet Union. A JMCL would provide a direct facsimile transmission capability between the two national crisis control centers (in the United States, the National Military Command Center in the Pentagon). It would supplement, but not supplant, existing diplomatic channels.

Placing a JMCL in the national military command centers would enable us to build on and strengthen the existing rapid communications system, and reduce requirements for additional personnel, training, etc. Also, it would allow rapid exchange of highly technical information that could be essential to understanding and therefore resolving a nuclear or other military crisis. No existing communication channel between the United States and the USSR has a similar capability.

A JMCL could be used to implement agreements on the sharing of military information that is time urgent. It could, for example, be the mechanism for the consultations on terrorist nuclear activity that we discuss later in this report. It could also be the designated vehicle for the ballistic missile launch and military exercise notifications proposed by the President.

A JMCL could also have a crisis control function. It could be used in the event of any military incident that required urgent communication between the United States and the USSR, but did not warrant direct contact between the two heads of government.

A JMCL could also be used for cooperation--rather than avoidance of confrontation--between the two countries in certain urgent situations. For example, if a military craft of the one side were lost or disabled, a JMCL would facilitate assistance by the other. Similarly, it could ensure proper handling of any space objects with nuclear components which threatened to impact on land.

We believe that exercises of a JMCL and its regular use for implementing information-sharing agreements would go far toward ensuring that the system would work well in any crisis.

The information-sharing function of a JMCL would provide both sides with a series of opportunities--in time-sensitive, but not emergency, situations--to increase their familiarity with the system and to identify any procedural changes which would heighten its usefulness in a military crisis.

Joint U.S.-Soviet exercises of a JCML could also offer an important vehicle for refining and building each side's confidence in the system.

## 2. Multilateral Military Communications Link

While the bilateral JMCL concept could enhance communication and reduce the risk of war arising from miscalculation or misinterpretation, we believe that a multilateral MCL would not be desirable. It would be extremely difficult to determine which states to include in a multilateral network. The addition of too many states would threaten to make a MCL so unwieldy that it would never function effectively.

## 3. Embassy-Capital High Rate Data Communication Link

Another promising method of improving crisis communications between the United States and the Soviet Union could be for each to establish high rate data links between its head of government and its embassy in the other's capital. We believe that such a system could provide an important supplement to the DCL and to a JMCL.

Each government would install and control its own system, using its own technology. Nevertheless, introduction of the system would require consent pursuant to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities. A bilateral agreement would also be essential to ensure that each government agreed to allow the other to bring in the necessary equipment freely and without interference.

## 4. Crisis Control Center

We have also carefully considered the suggestions for a U.S.-Soviet or multinational crisis control center, but have concluded that it would not be desirable to establish such an institution at this time. Over time, our experience with operating a JMCL might allow us to pursue the idea of a crisis control center, by indicating ways in which we could reduce the risks involved in it to an acceptable level. We doubt, however, that a multilateral crisis control center located in a neutral country will ever be feasible. We expect that the use of a JMCL would be more likely to point the way to a bilateral mechanism linking separate crisis control bodies located in Washington and Moscow.

A crisis control center located in a neutral country would be far removed from the national capitals where crisis decisions would have to be made. This separation would present several serious drawbacks. It is most likely that a center would be completely bypassed in national crisis decisionmaking. If not, a center would create a cumbersome extra layer in the national and international decision processes, retarding action just when speed was most imperative. Moreover, flexibility in deciding when to communicate, which would be an important feature of a JMCL, would be difficult to achieve in an institutionalized U.S.-Soviet crisis control center. The institution would provide a clear and legitimate channel for automatic consideration of any crisis--including those in which Soviet participation would serve to heighten, rather than reduce, tensions.

A multilateral crisis control center would suffer from even more problems. The more members in a center, the less likely that they would all share a common interest in preventing the outbreak or escalation of conflict. Even if that were not the case, the decisionmaking process in a multinational center would easily become bogged down, and inhibit timely, concerted actions to avert a serious crisis. Indeed, there would be a general risk that the facility would evolve from a confidential tool for crisis management into a forum for waging propaganda warfare over sensitive crises.

Finally, the expansion of the number of recipients of shared information would increase the danger that a member government might use the facility to spread disinformation or misuse gathered information. With unrestricted membership, it would be impossible by definition to exchange intelligence data. Any shared information would immediately be in the public domain.

##### 5. Information Sharing Facility

A U.S.-Soviet institution for sharing information on nuclear activities by third countries or terrorists would present many of the problems associated with a crisis control center and add new ones. Since such a body would concentrate on information exchange, the risks would increase that the Soviets could transform it into a new source of sensitive intelligence data or attempt to exploit it for disinformation purposes. Those risks would be compounded if an effort was made to endow the institution with a general data bank or if it was made a multilateral rather than bilateral forum.

Although an information-sharing institution therefore does not seem feasible, we are considering a multilateral agreement providing for consultations during particular nuclear crises.

Nations party to the agreement would, when they deemed appropriate, consult with each other on nuclear explosions or acquisition of nuclear weapons by terrorist groups. By limiting the consultation to an aspect of the nuclear proliferation problem that is of particular concern to virtually all states, the agreement would minimize the risk that a nation would use it for disinformation purposes.



ACIS - 207/83

SUBJECT: Confidence Building Measures

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